

***TOWN OF NEWFIELDS BOARD OF SELECTMEN
MEETING MINUTES
AUGUST 15, 2006***

The meeting was called to order at 6:40pm. Selectmen present were: Janet Smith and James McIlroy. Wes Moore joined the meeting in progress. Others present were: Elizabeth Hackett, Tom Hackett, Brian Knipstein, Jed Rumford, Gary Davy, Chief Reed and Lt. Gould.

Chief Reed updated the Selectmen on the following items:

1. Canine training is being done tonight at Dr. Hackett's old house. About two dozen cruisers are at the property now.
2. A week and a half ago a cruiser backed into another vehicle. There was minimal damage to the vehicles and no claim will be filed.
3. The DUI stops have begun. There have been two arrests out of three stops. None of these arrests have been Town residents.
4. The speed grant is ongoing. Many vehicles have been stopped, but less than 1/3 of the stopped vehicles are issued a violation. Janet mentioned that she has received complaints that the Police Department is being too aggressive. The Chief explained that the purpose of the grant is to stop people from speeding.
5. The application for reimbursement from FEMA for damage from the flood has been approved. The check will arrive from FEMA sometime this fall for approximately \$15,000. This includes expenses from the Highway, Fire, and Police Departments.
6. Hazardous Mitigation – this is for the Highway and Fire Departments. Each can apply to put in cisterns. Chief Reed will speak with Brian Knipstein regarding this matter.
7. Personnel Plan – the Chief has made some notes on the Plan and would like to review them with the Selectmen. As it will take more than five minutes to discuss, he would like to do so at a future meeting. Lt. Gould mentioned that there are many gray areas in the Plan which can be easily fixed to avoid labor issues. She said that general language can be twisted and manipulated and that it is important to be real clear on the intent of the Plan. Also, the Plan states that payday is Tuesday where the actual payday is Wednesday.

8. Lt. Gould is meeting with the Epping outdoor venture club next week and said that the Newfields Venture Club can piggyback with the Epping program until the Newfields Club is up and running. Newfields will be participating with the Epping Club next week at the full ropes course at Waterville Valley.
9. The “Helping Hands” letter was sent out to Newfields residents.
10. The Police website has been updated with photographs of the storm damage around town.

Brian Knipstein reported that the sinkhole at the Town Landing has been repaired. The paving on Railroad Avenue has been completed. The paving on Railroad Avenue has been completed. Brian will obtain the invoice from Bell & Flynn so that we can forward it to the NH DOT for payment.

There is a catch basin on the curve on Pleasant Street, but it does not appear to be catching rainwater. Brian needs to look at the catch basin during a rainstorm to observe the water flow.

Tom and Elizabeth Hackett were at the meeting to discuss a Current Use Change Tax invoiced to Elizabeth. Dr. Hackett thought the penalty tax he paid on the four acre section he took out of current use was appropriate and he paid that tax. However, he feels the invoice to Elizabeth for land he transferred to her is too high as that land is backland, has no access, cannot be built on or developed, and the railroad has told him he may not cross the railroad tracks to get to the land.

Janet stated that if the application for Current Use had been filed prior to the April 15th deadline, this issue could have been avoided.

Dr. Hackett would like the Selectmen to reconsider the Land Use Change Tax. The Selectmen decided that they will speak with the Assessor to determine how he arrived at a value for the backland. They will advise Dr. Hackett of the results of the conversation with the Assessor.

Wes stated that Dr. Hackett or Elizabeth could give the Town a Conservation Easement on the land in order to receive a tax break.

Jed Rumford and Gary Davy brought the Selectmen up to date on the removal of downed trees at various cemeteries in Town. The tree removal cost as of now is \$8,600. with \$5,600. being paid by the Bell Paul Fund. The remaining \$3,000. will be paid out of the Cemetery Departments funds as it is not eligible for reimbursement from the Bell Paul Fund.

There are still a couple of tree stumps to be removed and then the area filled in

with loam. Some headstones need to be placed back where they belong. Jed said there were no complaints from the residents.

Another tree has been struck by lightning and the cost to remove it is approximately \$850. It will be left as it is because neither a crane nor a bucket truck can get to that area to remove it. It is possible that the damaged tree will remain standing another fifty years.

Locust Grove does not have any lots left for sale. Bald Hill has lots available as does Newfields. The Hilton Cemetery is full.

Scott Moulton will not spray the edges of the cemeteries as he normally does in order to save \$1,600. this year.

While at the Bald Hill Cemetery, Jed noticed that a few ruts in the road need to be filled in. He also suggested that the Town put in metal rods to mark each cemetery plot corner. The metal rods will last longer than the temporary wooden rods now being used and could be located with a metal detector. This would save anyone who buys a cemetery plot from having to purchase granite cornerstones at a cost of about \$800. per grave. Granite cornerstones are currently used to mark the plots.

Nancy gave the Selectmen a status report on the insurance claim for damages to the Town Hall. The insurance adjuster has been out to view the damage and the company giving the estimate for repairs has been out. The estimate for repairs should be received in a couple of weeks.

The Selectmen need to make a list of items that need to be fixed or repaired at the Town Hall. A central holding area is also needed for all Town records such as cemetery, fire, trustees, library, etc. A question was raised as to whether the old Post Office Building would be an appropriate storage area.

With regard to the Dispatch Contract with Newmarket, a decision must be made whether or not to stay with Newmarket and pay up to \$40,000. or change to Rockingham Dispatch which is already paid for by county taxes. There may be costs to change the fire and police equipment over to Rockingham Dispatch, but estimates have not been received from the two departments.

At this time the Selectmen have decided to sign the five year contract with Newmarket Dispatch as long as there is an escape clause. This issue may be put on the ballot for the voters to decide – pay the \$40,000. to remain with Newmarket or change to Rockingham Dispatch.

The resident with a zoning board violation for failure to erect a fence surrounding a pool was granted an extension to September 6th, 2006. This was recommended by town counsel. Janet will send a letter to the property owners.

Wes received a letter from Attorney Breed inquiring about the negotiations on the Cole property. Wes will send a letter to her that everything went fine and we will contact her if we need any further assistance.

Wes made a motion to appoint Steve Shope and Mike Price as representatives from the Town of Newfields to the Piscassic Greenway Management Advisory Committee for two year terms each. Janet seconded the motion and the motion passed with all in favor. Nancy will call Steve and Mike to advise them of their appointments and Janet will contact the applicants not appointed. James reiterated that the Town of Newfields has final approval of the Piscassic Greenway Management Advisory Plan.

Janet made a motion to accept the minutes of the August 8, 2006 meeting. James seconded the motion and it passed with both in favor. Wes abstained from voting as he did not attend the meeting.

The Selectmen decided not to wait any longer to hear from the resident with the potential junkyard. They will meet tomorrow, August 16th at 7:45am to view the property in question.

The letter from PSNH was read regarding a credit issued to the Town in the amount of \$552.59. This credit will be applied to monthly invoices until it is used up.

The Selectmen's copy of a letter from the NH Department of Revenue Administration was reviewed. A copy of the letter was given to Don Doane. Pam Abbott was given the Town's Audit information so that she may respond to the letter. Pam will be asked to provide copies of any correspondence she may send to the DRA to the Selectmen.

Rockingham Land Trust paid the interest charges for the short term loan which the Town had to obtain for the Piscassic Greenway purchase before the bond could be issued. Ocean National Bank refunded \$1,481.64 in interest to the Town. The Selectmen decided to return this interest overpayment to Rockingham Land Trust. A check will be issued to them at the next check run.

Nancy was asked to contact the auditors regarding a statement on the 2005 year end audit which states that the Town did not receive approval from the DRA to expend in excess of total budgeted appropriations. Newfields did not adopt the Municipal Budget Law and should not be subject to this provision.

Rockingham Land Trust sent a letter to the Board of Selectmen stating that they are completing the Baseline Documentation Report for both the farmland and wildlife conservation easements on the Ruth B. Cole property.

The letter from the Newfields Water Sewer District was reviewed.

With Direct Deposit now available for town employees, it was decided to change the dates on the checks issued by the Town from Tuesday to Wednesday. This does not change the pay date – checks will still be distributed on Wednesdays. The Employee Handbook will be amended to reflect this change.

Checks were signed by the Selectmen.

The Selectmen went into a non-public session at 9:30pm per RSA 91-A:II.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:50pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy J. Spencer